

## You shall cover it with pure gold, from within and from without you shall cover it.

The *Aron's* connection with the *Torah* is obvious. Indeed, the arrangement of pure gold both within and without symbolizes *Chazal's* dictum that a *Torah* scholar's public behavior must be consistent with his inner character. He cannot profess one set of beliefs in his relationship with Hashem while acting in a manner unbecoming a person of his spiritual stature in his interaction with people. A *talmid chacham* is--and should be--the embodiment of *Torah*. This should be reflected in his total demeanor.

The *Talmud*, *Berachos 28a*, relates that when Rabban Gamliel was the *Nasi*, prince, he decreed that any student who was not *tocho k'baro*, his public demeanor not consistent with his internal character, could not enter the *Bais Hamedrash* to study *Torah*. Obviously, such a demanding criterion precluded many from entering the *yeshivah's* halls to study *Torah*. When Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah became the *Nasi*, he removed the guard that stood by the door as he relaxed the standard for entrance into the *yeshivah*. Now it became possible for anyone who desired to study *Torah* to gain access to the *Bais Hamedrash*. That day many new benches were added to the *Bais Hamedrash* to accommodate the influx of students.

The commentators question the identity of the *shomer ha'pesach*, the watchman who was able to discern the spiritual integrity of those who entered. **Horav Avraham Yaakov Zvi, z"l m'Sadiger**, comments that actually no guard was tending the door. The doors of the *Bais Hamedrash* were sealed closed with a bolt. The student who was really devoted to his studies, who would not let anything stand in the way of his spiritual achievement, found a way to get into the *yeshivah*. His entry was dependent upon his desire. He who "traversed high fences" or "dug deep beneath the ground" to gain access to the House of Study, manifested that he truly possessed the resolution to study *Torah*, regardless of the circumstances. This type of student embodied the trait, *tocho k'baro*.

**Horav D. Eisman, Shlita**, observes that *Chazal* say that "benches" were added. They do not focus on the many students who joined, but rather on the benches. This implies that perhaps not so many new students came. Rather the students' perspective towards material comfort was transformed. The previous student body, whose spiritual devotion and integrity were unquestionable, sufficed when studying *Torah*--even under conditions that did not seem to provide for their creature comforts. Even a crowded *Bais Hamedrash* with no place to sit did not deter them from studying *Torah*. The new breed of students found it necessary to demand a state-of-the-art *Bais Hamedrash*. Suddenly, there were not enough benches to enable everyone to sit comfortably. By relaxing the requirements for entrance, they also diminished the standard of excellence among some of their students. It became crucial to provide for the new group of students as well as the original ones. Only a gifted and devoted *Rosh Hayeshivah* would have the skill to integrate the group in such a way that the incoming students would fall under the influence

of those who also demonstrated a greater regard for their studies. That is the basis of *chinuch*, *Torah* education.